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An
Inaugural Dissertation
on Hepatitis
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A Dissertation, &c.

Hepatitis or Inflammation of the liver, from the vital importance of the organ assailed, from the violence of its attack and the frequent occurrence of it, in the United States, and more particularly in the Southern States, is very justly considered one of the most distressing diseases, to which the human system is liable. Having resided for several years, in a part of the country, whose climate is peculiarly favourable to the production of this complaint, it has frequently occurred, within the sphere of our own observation, and having been once or twice the subject of it ourselves, it excited a spirit of enquiry and has from our earliest pursuits in medicine gained much of our time and attention. Although with us this disease has been a subject of long and strict investigation, and assiduous attention, yet we are well aware of our inability to offer any thing original or interesting on it, it having heretofore been ably treated of by all practical writers; having however seen it in all its stages, and tested by observation, the

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correctness of their statements, we have chosen it, as a subject, for our inaugural Dissertation —

Description of Hepatitis

In the following observations, we shall attempt to give a correct description of the causes, symptoms, and method of cure of the different forms of inflammation of the liver —

Hepatitis has generally been divided into two kinds the one acute, the other chronic —

Symptoms of Acute Hepatitis —

This complaint makes its attack more or less suddenly usually coming on with a sense of chillness, succeeded by high fever, and pain in the right side, sometimes pungent, and sometimes obtuse, which extends generally to the shoulder or clavicle of the side affected, but often to the opposite side, and is much increased when pressure is made upon the part, and to which the patient often applies his hand seeking for relief. These symptoms are attended, with cough, difficulty

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of breathing and an inability of lying except on the side affected. At this time, there is considerable fever; the pulse is strong, hard, frequent, and intermitting, but sometimes it is somewhat feeble and oppressed. We have remarked that in the latter description of pulse, the intermission and hacking cough were more frequent and distressing than in the former and the cough seemed to be caused by the intermitting pulse. When the pulse intermits there appears to be, a temporary congestion of blood in the lungs, which produces some irritation and consequently the cough. At the time we suffered with this complaint, we frequently placed our fingers on the radial artery, for the purpose of observing, whether the intermitting pulse and cough were concomitant — and we found that the former symptom invariably produced or was instantaneously succeeded by the latter together with some anxiety and oppression about the precordia — The skin is hot and dry, the tongue covered with a white or yellowish fur, and it is said, that "when the alvine ducts

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[illegible] tongue, the [illegible] tongue
coated with a deep yellow colour, though this disease frequently occurs without any [illegible] symptom.
In addition to these symptoms "there are sometimes nausea and sickness and even a vomiting of bilious matter; the [illegible] and the [illegible] show a deficiency of biliary secretion, or at least of any admixture of it with them." (Thos. Practice)
The [illegible] matter is generally in the [illegible] case of the liver, just before it coagulates, the red part falling to the bottom and the buffy coat not being yet formed appears of green colour —
Nosologists have generally made a distinction between the symptoms that occur when the inflammation occupies the convex surface of the liver and those that are present when the disease affects the concave. Cullen remarks "the [illegible] that the acute hepatitis seldom affects the convex surface of the liver and that the parenchymatous and the chronic kind, the acute disease may be
(Treated.

seated either in the mucous or in the cellular tissue of the liver. In the former case a more pungent pain and hiccough may be produced and the remedies are more considerably effective. In the latter case there is less pain and a swelling is produced commonly by some inflammation communicated to the stomach.

Yellow matters or bile are destitute of equivocal marks influenced by the particular surface affected, but Thomas after enumerating these signs in his work exactly in other words says "If in the stools during a fit of vomiting or in the urine (in the hepatitis accompanied by jaundice) as was an-Bright and Ashwell permit me to say that the symptoms which have just been pointed out are so unequivocal as has been represented by most writers —

Causes of Acute Hepatitis

Hepatitis is more apt to occur in warm than in cold or temperate climates —

Excessively warm weather is here as

inflammation of other parts of the system, as colds, external injuries contusions, and bleeding. It is likewise produced by the severe summer heat by violent exercise, by long continued intermittent fevers, by solid concretions in the liver, by high living and by a free indulgence in the use of vinous and spirituous liquors. This latter cause is a very common source of the disease in the Northern States. Persons who live in the marshy or malarious districts in Virginia and who are even tolerably temperate in the use of spirituous liquors are very often assailed by this disease —

Symptoms of chronic Hepatitis

Though strongly chronic inflammation of the liver is frequently very severe so much so, indeed, that the disease sometimes exists so violent as to formulcerations on the liver and is never known to be present until discovered by dissection after death.

This form of Hepatitis is attended with a bad complexion, yellowness of the eyes and skin

pain in the stomach, indigestion, costiveness, flatulency, foul breath, and sluggish circulation. There is a dull pain in the side affected, extending to the shoulder, a sense of weight and fullness of the liver with an enlargement and hardness of this viscera. The patient is melancholy and in fear of retirement. In some cases of chronic Hepatitis the pulse is made to intermit.

The **Causes** that give rise to chronic inflammation of the liver are mostly such as induce the acute form of the complaint. The chronic frequently proceeds the acute and the acute so often terminates in chronic inflammation of this viscera.

Diagnostic Symptoms of Hepatitis

"We may readily distinguish Hepatitis from Pneumonia by the pain in the inner extremity of the shoulder, by the position of the countenance, by the cough being unaccompanied with expectoration and by the less degree of dyspnoea. The heat and pain not being increased upon taking any thing into the stomach

stomach in being able to retain whatever liquids or medicines are received into it without the immediate rejection of them and the less prostration of strength will distinguish it from Gastritis. Hepatitis may be distinguished from spasm on the gall ducts by there being no nausea by the pain being permanent by the pulse being full hard and afterwards in a minute and by the patient preferring always to keep the body in a straight quiescent posture, whereas the greatest ease when there is spasm on the gall ducts is obtained by bending the body forwards on the knees." (Th. Practice)

Hepatitis may terminate like other inflammations either by resolution, suppuration or gangrene but most frequently by suppuration. Except in very rare cases it rarely terminates in suppuration and the occurrence of gangrene is very rare — The resolution or tendency to the one or the other of the above terminations may be known by the same characteristic symptoms that distinguish the preceding stages of

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of inflammations generally.

Treatment of Acute Hepatitis

The mode of treatment in an inflammation of the liver does not materially differ from that which has been found most successful in other parts of the system. It is usually relieved very speedily by profuse bleeding, sufficiently to cause a slight syncope. Bandages must be applied and firmly applied so long as the pulse remains hard and strong, and there is pain in the side we should not cease to bleed. If this is not found sufficient, we must then operate by paracentesis, resorted to. In addition to general venesection we should not fail to have recourse to local bleeding as early as possible and as frequently as the case may require, which must be carried on in the region of the liver. After the pain and the fever have yielded to bleeding, a blister should be applied on the right side but a remark made by Dr Ainslie in Madras at this time strongly attended to "Never run to bleeding in consequence of the hopeless state of a blister till

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[illegible] recovery. [illegible] employed [illegible] they hardly [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] excessive [illegible] excitement. If [illegible] not [illegible] a [illegible] of them must be [illegible] which [illegible] to [illegible] open the [illegible] by [illegible] diaphoresis.

In all cases [illegible] the [illegible] should be [illegible] observed [illegible] in which the symptoms [illegible] a [illegible] inappropriate. The bowels should be kept perfectly open by the use of purgatives as [illegible] and [illegible] the neutral salts and Castor oil. Fomentations applied to the part [illegible] and sometimes the general warm bath are found to be excellent auxiliaries. [illegible] should be kept up by the use of [illegible] to which may be added nitrate of Potash.

If after the reduction of the violent inflammatory symptoms the disease still proves refractory and [illegible]

Found

found not to give any and an uneasiness and dull pain be felt about the region of the liver Mercury should be used so as to produce a mild and gentle salivation. I believe all practitioners concur in the propriety of this practice.

If inconvenience or not being able to leave home from the nature of the case, in many also mentioned here, it produced the usual slight salivation has ceased we should pronounce the termination of the disease and the beginning of the convalescence. The first intention may be effected by giving Tonics. Bark every hour or two in the course of the day, or the dose of a drachm or more a wineglass. Air, and a moderate portion of wine.

We prescribe the [illegible] in the morning [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] day. When the tumor [illegible] [illegible] two hours carefully open it with a lancet. [illegible] the [illegible] but this practice is very often [illegible] with [illegible] [illegible]

Jaundice

days, "an inflammation of the iris when it adheres to the peritoneum which was generally the case, and a tumour appeared, usually it was several times opened with success." He then goes on to describe several cases in which the practice proved successful.

Treatment of Chronic Iritis

[illegible] in which relief should be sought, is the use of Mercury so as to excite a gentle and continued salivation. "[illegible] the iris [illegible] the [illegible] the system gently affected by mercury [illegible] are urgent but in order to [illegible] from and subsides [illegible] which will necessarily arise we shall have to resort in some instances to venesection and to Blistering" — (Chapman's Therapeutics 18)

[illegible] there are some cases so very effractical which must be gradually but perseveringly and boldly subdued. [illegible] of these

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[illegible] [illegible] is [illegible] as [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] was thought to be the most important [illegible] remedy. Nitric Acid is another remedy, which has acquired a high reputation in the treatment of chronic Hepatitis. "Nitric Acid [illegible] [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the system and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] all the functions [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] useful remedy in a great variety of [illegible] besides those already mentioned. Of these the most striking are certain forms of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] when there is [illegible] [illegible] ability to [illegible] the use of Mercury or when it has been used ineffectually." (Chapman's Therapeutics & Mat. Med.)

Of late the Nitro Muriatic Acid has been much employed in the treatment of Hepatitis. Even in the acute form of this complaint, Dr Scott thinks [illegible] highly beneficial. [illegible] [illegible] generally [illegible] the chronic [illegible] [illegible] either at its commencement [illegible] [illegible] and in such cases [illegible] too violent, the Nitro Muriatic

Acid

[illegible] if [illegible] the disease would greatly rise in its severity and relapse.

Considering [illegible] the most frequent in our chronic affections of the liver. Of the nature and treatment of chronic hepatitis he makes the following remarks and as we think satisfactorily.

"Chronic hepatitis [illegible] acute, but it may be considered as always partaking of the nature of both. One portion of the [illegible] inflammation [illegible] and [illegible] particular suffering [illegible] the [illegible] hepatitis [illegible] in the [illegible] key. It is this manner deserve [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] which give rise to great variety of uncomfortable symptoms.

[illegible] of [illegible] the Mercurialists and applied to it which is the most effectual and simplest remedy. A few hours or even a single hour will sometimes bring relief, but it

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is necessary to continue the remedy, till the system be sufficiently affected by it and to repeat it occasionally till the patient has recovered his usual degree of strength. This is a rule in affections of the liver of the utmost importance. A state of weakness however produced is the great remote cause of those chronic affections: so that we may remove the disease, but till the strength and vigor of the circulation be restored we have no security against a return of it."

The expressed juice of the Dandelion has been given in the quantity of a gill or half pint a day with considerable success by some Physicians in this form of Hepatitis.

"To succeed in this disease, under any plan of treatment, the use of flannel next the skin, and an adherence to the antiphlogistic regimen is necessary. "As a laxative and an alterative the long continued use of pills composed of Rhubarb and castile soap is highly recommended." (Colwell, Cullen)

The above are the most important observations

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we have been able to collect on the nature and treat=
=ment of this complaint. I am aware that a great
variety of diseases are produced by, and connected
with this affection of the liver, but the extent of
my knowledge, the limits of this essay and the
nature of my avocations at this time, positively
forbid me, from describing them, which would
require much time and occupy many vo=
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